

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE A1NEW YORK TIMES  
27 November 1986

# 3 Agencies Said to Have Received Data About Iran Money Transfers

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26 — The Defense Department, National Security Council and Central Intelligence Agency received messages intercepted over the last year suggesting that money from arms deals with Iran was being diverted to Nicaraguan rebels, according to knowledgeable officials.

These officials said it was not clear whether anyone in Government understood the significance of the fragmentary intercepts. But some one familiar with the messages said they should have raised questions in the minds of responsible Government officials.

The Reagan Administration has said that only two Government officials knew proceeds from the arms sales had been funnelled to the rebels.

Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d said Tuesday that intercepts had played an important role in tipping off Justice Department investigators to the diversion of money to the Nicaraguan rebels.

Meanwhile, several sources said investigators are looking into whether money from the Swiss bank account had been diverted to other Administration-supported projects, such as aid to the Afghan guerrillas.

The issue of who sees the messages intercepted by the National Security Agency is politically sensitive. The State Department apparently was not permitted to see the intercepts relating to Iran during the period of the arms sales. The precise nature of the messages on the arms transactions was not clear.

## Threat by Weinberger Reported

Walter F. Mondale, the former Vice President, said today that he had learned from a Republican source that as the secret dealings with Iran began, the White House attempted to cut both the State Department and the Defense Department off from N.S.A. intercepts dealing with Iran. He said that Caspar W. Weinberger, the Secretary of Defense, refused to accept this arrangement, threatening to bar release of the weapons needed for the deal unless he was shown the message traffic.

This account was confirmed by a knowledgeable official.

The N.S.A. intercepts mountains of international communications, from

telexes to radio messages to telephone conversations. The agency's computers are programmed to highlight those intercepts in which key words are mentioned by the participants.

One official said, for example, that some of the intercepts deal with conversations about Iran involve Maj. Gen. Richard Secord, a retired Pentagon official who has been identified as a key figure in both the Iran arms dealings and the private network to aid the contras.

Another set of conversations that were probably intercepted by the N.S.A. involved Lieut. Col. Oliver L. North, the White House aide who was dismissed, Mr. Meese said, for diverting money from the Iran arms dealings to the contras. According to telephone records disclosed in El Salvador, Colonel North and General Secord received phone calls from a house in San Salvador used by the employees of an operation that resupplied the contras.

Messages intercepted by the N.S.A. are normally handled only by officials with high-level security clearances. At the National Security Council, for instance, such data would go to the office of the President's national security adviser, who was then Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter.

Mr. Meese said Tuesday that Admiral Poindexter, who resigned his post, had only limited knowledge of the operation.

One issue that Congressional investigating committees will be examining is the precise role of the C.I.A.

## Handling of Iran Funds

Knowledgeable officials gave this description of how money moved from Iran through the agency to the Pentagon.

They said that a bank account was set up, either by Colonel North or unknown persons, to receive payments by Iran for the arms. Those funds were in turn moved to a Swiss bank account set up by the C.I.A., which was supposed to pay the Pentagon for the \$12 million worth of weapons taken from Defense Department stocks.

The agency, if it followed standard procedures, would keep detailed records of how much money flowed through this account. But officials said that they have no evidence that the C.I.A. had direct knowledge of how much money was moving through the account set up by Colonel North.

## Authorization by Reagan

Another hint that the contras had suddenly received an infusion of money arose about six months ago, when detailed intelligence reports began circulating about the improved equipment supplied to the contras. These reports showed how much material and equipment was reaching the contras. The intelligence agencies, however, had no explanation for the sudden shift in the contras' fortunes.

William J. Casey, the Director of Central Intelligence, has told Congress that the agency's Directorate of Operations became significantly involved in the Iran dealings after Jan. 17, when President Reagan authorized the covert dealings with Iran.

Mr. Casey said the role had included the creation of the appropriate Swiss bank accounts into which the proceeds from the Iran arms sales were deposited and the hiring of a retired C.I.A. employee who was a translator.

Knowledgeable officials said, however, that there appeared to have been some C.I.A. involvement in the shipments to Iran from Israel in late 1985. These officials said that a C.I.A.-owned company had made at least one shipment from Israel to Iran on Nov. 25, 1985. Mr. Casey told Congress that no record could be located of this shipment. One source said Tuesday that this company was International Air Tours, a Nigerian-based company that

has since gone bankrupt. But another official said today that another company had made the flight. He would not disclose its name.

In an article published today, the Harte-Hankes newspapers quoted from a speech by Colonel North to the Independent Petroleum Association of America on May 2, 1986. In it, Colonel North said: "There is something terribly wrong when this nation cannot offer young men and women more than a hope of dying for a cause they believe." He noted that Congress had cut off all but humanitarian aid to the contras, and said: "There ought to be something this country can do for people like this."

Colonel North, according to a tape recording of the speech quoted by the newspaper chain, which is based in San Antonio, Tex., said he had conferred with President Reagan about terrorism and Central America just a few weeks before the speech.